

Mining Projects

Water Program Permitting Guide

PERMITTING OF:

- ◊ Storm Water
 - ◊ Pumped Ground Water
 - ◊ Process Wastewater
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STORM WATER, PUMPED GROUND WATER, & PROCESS WASTEWATER for MINING PROJECTS

HOW AND WHERE TO APPLY

Mining projects may need a variety of permits before they can begin operations. This brochure will help the operator of a proposed mine determine the water pollution control permits that are needed from the Bureau of Water and how to apply for them.

The Industrial Agricultural and Storm Water Permitting (IASWP) Division is responsible for permitting the storm water, ground water, and process wastewater generated at mining sites. However, not all mining operations will generate wastewater or pump ground water. More information on these types of discharges is given below. The Bureau of Land and Waste Management is responsible for general permitting of the operation of all mining projects. You should contact them at (803)896-4000 to determine their application procedures.

Overall mining applications are first made to the Bureau of Land and Waste Management according to their procedures. When the Bureau of Land and Waste Management receives an application for a proposed mine or an expansion of an existing mine, they send the pertinent information on the proposed mining operation to the Bureau of Water's IASWP Division. This Division makes a decision on whether a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or State Land Application Permit, also called an ND permit, is needed for either the storm water, the pumped groundwater, or the process wastewater at the mine. The IASWP Division then notifies the applicant for the mine and the Bureau of Land and Waste Management which permits are required. The appropriate application forms are mailed directly to the permit applicant.

When permits are required from the IASWP Division, the mine applicant will deal directly with the Division on these permits. For protection of the State's Water Quality, the construction and NPDES/ND permits of the Bureau of Water deal with the treatment and disposal of storm water, pumped ground water, and process wastewater. The Bureau of Land and Waste Management permits are separate from the Bureau of Water Permits. Their permits deal with the blasting, buffer zones, visual impacts, and land reclamation aspects of the mine. The Bureaus normally coordinate on the issuance or denial of their respective permits. However, the issuance of permits by either Bureau does not mean the other Bureau will issue their permits.

BUREAU OF WATER PERMITS

Storm Water. Mines must have an NPDES permit for the storm water runoff at the site. The IASWP Division of the Bureau of Water will determine whether an individual NPDES storm water permit is required or if the storm water discharge can be granted coverage under the storm water general NPDES permit. If general permit coverage is allowed, a Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted. General NPDES permit coverage for the storm water discharge is then effective forty eight (48) hours after mailing the NOI.

Pumped Ground Water. If a mine discharges pumped ground water to surface water, an NPDES permit is required for the discharge. The Bureau of Water has a general NPDES permit for this type of discharge. This general NPDES permit on pumped ground water also includes storm water. Most non-metal mineral mines will be covered under this general permit since it covers both storm water and pumped ground water discharges. If treatment of pumped ground water is required before discharge, this type of pumped ground water is permitted like process wastewater.

Process Wastewater. If a mine will generate process wastewater that must be treated, other than settling, before it is discharged to surface or ground waters, this project is processed as an application for the installation of a new wastewater treatment system. This requires the submittal of a preliminary engineering report, the issuance of an NPDES or ND permit, the issuance of a construction permit, and the issuance of final construction and operational approval. The NPDES or ND permit for the process wastewater will establish the effluent limitations for the discharge and must be issued before the construction permit. Please see the Bureau of Water publication entitled "Wastewater Treatment System Permitting" for more information on this matter.

PERMITTING QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding permitting of discharges from mining projects, please contact us at:

Industrial, Agricultural, &
Storm Water Permitting Division
SC DHEC
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803-734-5300

Also, please visit the DHEC Environmental WEB Page at Internet address: www.state.sc.us/dhec/eqchome.htm
Application forms and publications are available for downloading at this site.

Reminder: *If you call DHEC and talk to someone, it is best that you get their name and direct telephone number. The space below is provided to you for that purpose.*

Date Called: _____

Person you talked to: _____

Their Direct Telephone Number: _____

General Information Received: _____

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